

Town of Underhill
Development Review Board Minutes
October 19, 2015

Board Members Present:

Charles Van Winkle
Will Towle
Matt Chapek
Mark Hamelin
Penny Miller
Mark Greene
Karen McKnight

Staff Present:

Rachel Fifield, Planning & Zoning Administrator

Public Commenters via Email:

Jean Archibald
Steve Abair

Others Present:

Barbara and Richard Albertini (applicants)
Jennifer Desautels of Trudell Consulting (their engineer)
Marcy Gibson
Carolyn Gregson
Mike Wiesel
Pat Weisel
Peter Duval
Irene Linde
Nathan Goldman
Cynthia Seybolt
Caroline Bennet
Peter Bennet
John Angelino
Seth Friedman
Sue Kussentua

6:40 PM- 10/19/2015 DRB Meeting

- Chair Van Winkle called the meeting to order at 6:40 PM.

6:45 PM- (PV109) Albertini, Preliminary Review---Subdivision and PRD for 5 Lots

At 6:45 PM Chair Van Winkle opened the hearing and entered the Information Packet and Supplementary Packet as provided by staff.

Applicants Richard and Barbara Albertini are proposing a 5-lot PRD subdivision with the aid of their engineer, Jenn Desautels of Trudell Consulting. The Albertinis' current address is 139 Pleasant Valley Road in Underhill. Jennifer Desautels provided an overview of the proposed project. With questions from the Chair, she described the 5 lots of varying sizes, with gravel roadways and onsite water and sewer. Desautels went on to address concerns mentioned in the Information Packet, especially those from the Lamoureux and Dickinson independent review. She explained that they studied and designed the intersection to a 45 mph standard. Board member Penny Miller asked who conducted the study, and questioned the method of the study. Desautels replied that Trudell conducted it and L&D performed an independent review of the study. She also explained the location of the traffic counter, just south of the proposed access road. She passed out a highlighted copy of the plat showing deer wintering yards and waterways, indicating that they were all in the proposed "open space" section of the plat. Desautels

answered a board question (and staff report note) about stormwater management, noting that it was not finalized at this time and would be brought to the Final Review hearing. She circled back to the access questions, noting that she followed the 2015 Road, Driveway and Trail Ordinance in this plan.

At 7:10 PM Chair Van Winkle directed the Planning & Zoning Administrator to share any questions or concerns not discussed in the staff report. There were none at this time.

At 7:13 PM Chair Van Winkle opened the meeting to public comment.

Peter Duval (25 Pine Ridge Road) was concerned about intersection safety. He suggested considering New Road as an alternate access, and if it is off Pleasant Valley, wanted a 4-way access. Duval was also concerned about the grade of the drive, and cited data from 2005 about speeds in the area. He spoke at length about his belief that the Trudell traffic study was inaccurate.

Seth Friedman (144 Pleasant Valley Road) was greatly concerned about intersection safety. He advocated a 4-way intersection with Mountain Road as the safest option, and noted road standards generally promote 4-way intersections as safer than offset "T" intersections.

Carolyn Gregson (99 Pleasant Valley Road) expressed her concerns about the curb cut, and particularly advocated for a 4-way intersection with Mountain Road. She pointed out that the area is already icy and dangerous in the winter, and that Mountain Road is already a difficult access.

Pat Weisel (626 Irish Settlement) advocated strongly for an access via New Road.

Cynthia Seybolt (95 Pleasant Valley Road) wanted to get another speed test done. She worried that the current one didn't take into account traffic coming down the hill as well as slower traffic accessing Mountain Road, given the location of the traffic counter. She stated that "25%" (PZA note: did she mean 15%?) of traffic goes faster than the 45 mph discussed in the study, and that this needed attention.

At this point, the PZA read the letter sent to the Town Hall by Jean Archibald (22 Harvey Road) advocating for a New Road access. The letter from Steve Abair, concerned about access safety, was in the packet but was also referenced.

At 8:00 PM The Chair invited Jennifer Desautels to respond to the concerns mentioned during the public comment period. Desautels explained that the currently proposed location gets the required amount of sight distance for a 45 mph road, and is a safer location than the suggested 4-way intersection. Upon questions from the board, Desautels stated that she wasn't sure if they could carve out 480 feet of sight distance in the 4-way location, but both the "T" and the 4-way will require massive grading and earthmoving.

At 8:16 PM Board Member Mark Hamelin inquired about the accuracy of the site plan as regards the grading of the site. Desautels replied that the scale was difficult for reading grading, and that it could be altered for a clearer map at the next meeting.

At 8:36 PM Board member Will Towle inquired about the relative expense of the two sites. Facilitated by the Chair, Desautels replied that she had not pursued the 4-way location, and thus wasn't sure, but she

believed the costs would be comparable. She reiterated that they are not pursuing the proposed location for cost reasons.

At 8:46 PM the Chair returned the comment to the public, and invited them to respond.

Marcy Gibson (50 New Road) inquired as to why the proposed location is safer. She explained that cars coming down PVR already speed. It is unsafe for schoolchildren getting on and off the bus, and the bus driver on that route already requests that kids off New Road use Mountain Road because it is unsafe to cross Pleasant Valley. She felt that the proposed access (Applewood) would only worsen this problem for Applewood residents and others alike. She said that outside lane traffic can't see.

At 8:51 PM Board Member Miller inquired about what was already being done on that road to calm traffic. Multiple members of the public replied that nothing worked except the presence of the County Sheriff. A DRB member remarked that a calming study had been done over 6 years ago, but the research had not been implemented in any way.

At 8:54 PM Freidman spoke again, inquiring why, if 480 feet of sight distance is safe, the project can't be moved to the 4-way location and the 480 feet be carved out there.

At 8:59 PM Mike Wiesel (626 Irish Settlement) stated that he thought the proposed access location sounded safest and that it should be issued for that location. He noted that the grade of PVR is gentler there than in the 4-way location, and speculated that it might have better stopping distance.

At 9:02 PM Duval spoke again, with his continued concerns about the traffic study not taking Mountain Road traffic patterns into account. He discussed the school trails in the area, and public usage of the land. He wanted to keep those trails open, and wanted a path connecting Casey's Hill with those back trails. He emphasized that he wanted it deeded into the property. He briefly decried the nature of private land ownership, and then went on to reiterate his access concerns.

At 9:16 PM Irene Linde (68 Pleasant Valley Road) elaborated on Duval's idea about trails, noting that she liked the Jackson Hill trails and that something similar would be good at the proposed site.

At 9:20 PM Penny Miller moved to close the evidentiary portion of the meeting. Will Towle seconded.

At 9:23 PM Matt Chapek moved to discuss the decision in closed session. Mark Hamelin seconded. Karen McKnight was opposed but overruled.

At 10:35 PM the DRB came out of Deliberative session. Mark Hamelin moved to grant the conditional use, with the conditions to be discussed via email and in a potential second DRB meeting on the 2nd of November. The motion passed 5-2.

Respectfully submitted by:
Rachel Fifield, Planning and Zoning Administrator

These minutes of the 10/19/2015 meeting of the DRB were accepted

This _____ day of _____, 2015.

Charles Van Winkle, Chairperson

These minutes are subject to correction by the Underhill Development Review Board. Changes, if any, will be recorded in the minutes of that meeting of the DRB.